



## Book Review

**Tayuh: Kalangenan** Ivferiak **Priangan**, by Anis Sujana.  
Bandung: STSI Press, 2002.

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With various tribes that reside in Indonesia, cultural richness are unequivocal in the form of arts, culinary, buildings and traditions. Among them are various dancing types from each region in the archipelago. Each region in Indonesia from Sumatra to Papua is often associated with its traditional dances. With its historical famous from Mataram and colonial period to the middle of seventies in Java Island, Tayub is one type of traditional dances. Tayub has been well known in Middle Java and other places as symbol of fertility. It is associated with not only human fertility and goodness, but also natural fertility. It is why Tayub is commonly held to celebrate harvest months, life cycles such as birth, death, circumcise and wedding. In contrast, Tayub in West Java was originated in the upper layer of society. It grew hand in hand with political assertion of the Mataram Kingdom and Dutch colonialization. It became a symbol of status and power of the performers. As political values imposed in this dancing festival, the spreading to lower officers became distinct. It was soon adopted by the whole society.

Tayub introduces seven elements in the performance: dancers, instruments with its players, ronggeng, local alcohol beverages, money, choreography and places. However, the core element is the dance.

Using historical approach toward Tayub dancing, Anis Sujana elaborates historical narrative of Tayub in West Java. Its title *Tayub Kalangenan Menak Priangan* implicitly reflected the connection between Tayub and social life of Priangan aristocracy (*menak*). This book put an emphasis on the socio-political experiences of Tayub in Sundanese feudal society and process of the spreading to Sundanese society. It also discusses historically the form, function and the development of Tayub in its geographical limits and the social status of the proponents.

Tayub was the monopoly of aristocracy (*menak*). As the upper of social strata, aristocracy was furnished with traditional values as representation of high culture. The aristocracy was the center of all of

cultural orientations. The attributes that it brought forward affirmed the positions. It included various consolations and festivals. Tayub played significant role in this positions. Hence, Tayub grew in the sites surrounding cities and local leader residences. Pendopo, a typically hall in the front of building was usually used to held Tayub dancing. Aristocratic symbols reflected in its ethic and codes. Although it-uses women called *ronggeng*, the dance was in fact patriarchal, as it was frequently enjoyed by men. The dance was arranged based on social status. Here, Bupati was the first dancer followed by his assistances accorded to line of promotions. Anyone who wanted to participate had to ask permission with bowing as a code. A variety of songs and movements from a range of tempo from high bit to slow were played by requests. Each figure had his or her own favorite song. Well skilled performers were required and regarded as an ideal concept of leadership.

Another direction was the democracy of Tayub. It grew in the process of imitation from aristocracy to layman when Tayub performance in center of power had adopted to the lower level of leaders. Some Bupati asked his lower rank of officer to acquire Tayub dancing skills. Such skills are soon followed suit by lower officers. Even, lower officer performed the dance in order to get promoted and climb the career ladder. With the support of good economy, Tayub was gradually practiced by figures like large-scale merchants and the rich. It is about a time that ordinary people could come to participate in Tayuban in *balandongan*. Frequently, people hold competitions of Tayub among people to see who performs Tayub dancing the best.

Within historical phases, forms of Tayub had been improved. The Classical patterns of choreography have combined with wayang and topeng dance from Cirebon reflecting collaboration between high and low traditions. This process brought into a new standardization of Sundanese dancing. The new genre of standardized dancing soon called *ibingkeurseus* (course dancing), a name given for people can come to course places to learn this choreography. *Ibingkeurseus* as standard dancing leads to the emergence of Wirahmasari and other recent genres. It now becomes a standard dancing in the curriculum from elementary to university in West Java.

In his conclusion, Anis Sujana mentions that Tayub was typically monopoly of *menak* (aristocracy) culture. The dance started out from the *menak* traditions in exerting symbolic power and social status. The change in the wind of politics by the penetration of colonial government brought Tayub into new genres. Imitation process made it possible to lower people

outside the kadipaten to adopt Tayuban. Eventually, it leads to the appearance of new style of dancing by combining traditional-classic based dancing with two choreographies of folk dancing from Cirebon so called *ibingkeurseus*.

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